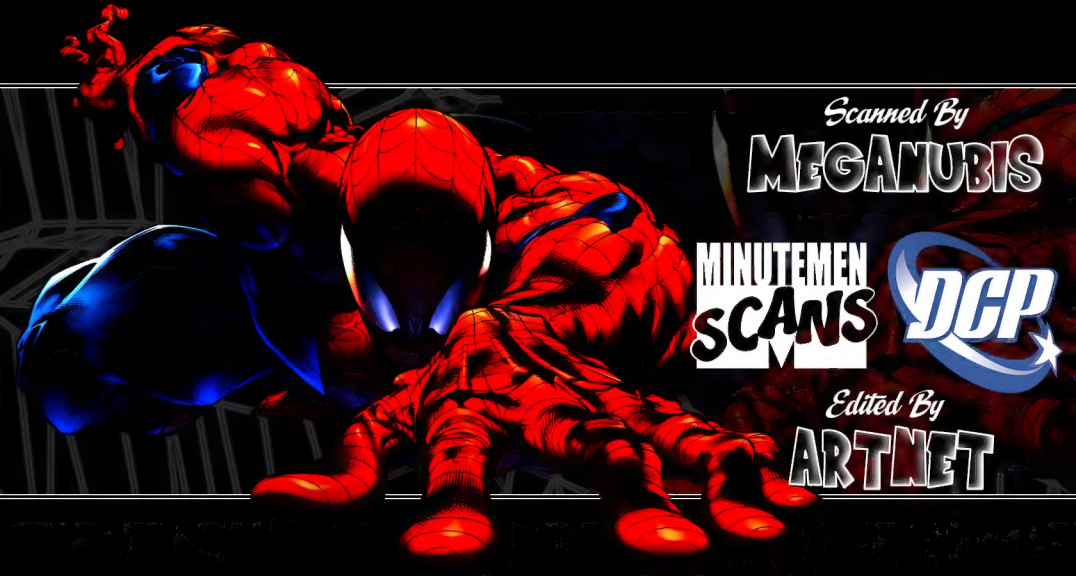

Scanned By
MEGANUBIS
MINUTEMEN
SCANS
DCP
Edited By
ARTNET

MARVEL COMICS

#1 of 4

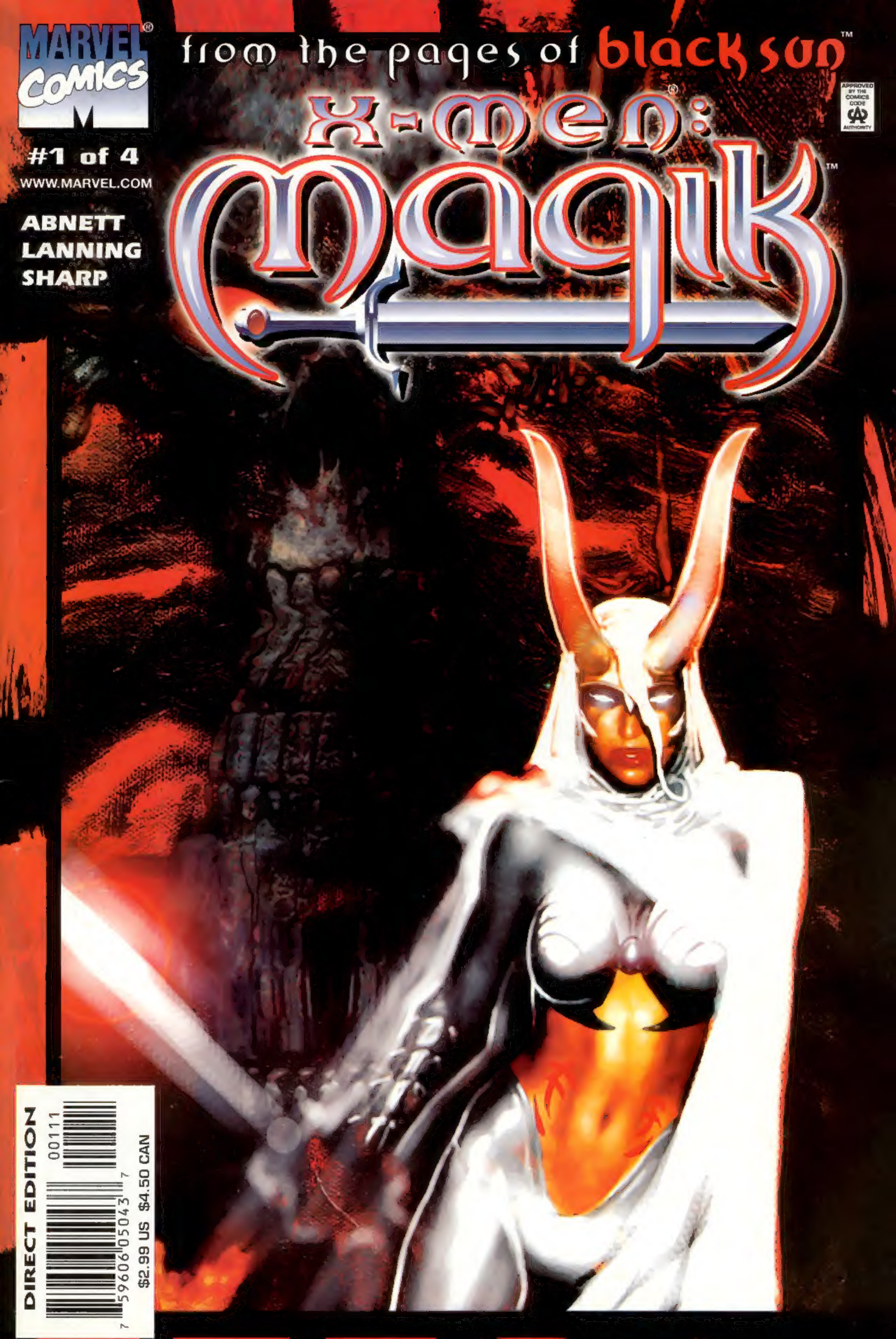
WWW.MARVEL.COM

ABNETT
LANNING
SHARP

from the pages of black sun™

X-men®: Magik™

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY



DIRECT EDITION

7 59606 05043 7 00111

$2.99 US $4.50 CAN

SO SHE TELLS ME IT ALL BEGAN IN THE **REALM OF NIGHTMARE**. AND THAT'S CHILLING ENOUGH AS IT IS.

BECAUSE SHE DOESN'T MEAN THE **SUBCONSCIOUS**... SHE MEANS A **REAL PLACE**, A POCKET DIMENSION RULED BY **LORD NIGHTMARE**, WHERE ALL PROWLING SLEEP-TERRORS ARE SIRED.

SHE WORRIES ME WHEN SHE TALKS LIKE THAT. SHE'S NOT THE GIRL I ONCE KNEW.

SHE SAID IT WAS..."**WEEKS**" AGO. TIME, OF COURSE, LIKE MATTER AND ENERGY, HAS A DIFFERENT MEANING IN THE **SPLINTER REALMS** THAT LIE OUTSIDE MY OWN DEPENDABLE, **CLOCKWORK** COSMOS.

BUT "**WEEKS**" WILL DO.

IT WAS **MOONSET**. THE STARS HAD JUST CEASED TO WEEP BLOOD, AND THINGS THAT WERE HALF THORN-TREE AND HALF ARACHNID WERE SCUTTLING AWAY INTO THE MISTS.

AND THEN THE **SCREAM** CAME.

MAGIK™: Vol. 1, No. 1, December, 2000. Published by MARVEL COMICS, Bill Jemas, President; Bob Harras, Editor-in-Chief; Stan Lee, Chairman Emeritus. OFFICE OF PUBLICATION: 387 PARK AVENUE SOUTH, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10016. Published monthly. Copyright © 2000 Marvel Characters, Inc. All rights reserved. Price $2.99 per copy in the U.S. and $4.50 in Canada. GST#127032852. No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons, and/or institutions in this magazine with those of any living or dead person or institution is intended, and any such similarity which may exist is purely coincidental. This periodical may not be sold except by authorized dealers and is sold subject to the condition that it shall not be sold or distributed with any part of its cover or markings removed, nor in a mutilated condition. MAGIK (including all prominent characters featured in this issue and the distinctive likenesses thereof) is a trademark of MARVEL CHARACTERS, INC. MARVEL COMICS is a division of MARVEL ENTERPRISES, INC. Peter Cuneo, Chief Executive Officer; Avi Arad, Chief Creative Officer.

IT WELLED UP FROM THE FETID DEPTHS OF LORD NIGHTMARE'S CASTLE, SHAKING THE CASEMENTS, SHIVERING THE STONES.

AT THE GATEHOUSE, THE GUARDS MADE WARDING SIGNS AND SHUDDERED. THEY RECOGNIZED THE PURE **TERROR** IN THE SCREAM.

AND THEY KNEW THAT THE MOST **UNHEARD** OF THING HAD HAPPENED...

...**LORD NIGHTMARE**, MASTER OF TROUBLED SLEEP AND DISTRESSED MINDS...

...HAD HIMSELF BEEN WOKEN BY A **NIGHTMARE**.

N--NOO!

J-JUST A *DREAM!* JUST A *FOUL IMAGINING...*

...HOW CAN IT HAVE *UNMADE* ME SO?

BETTER... THAT'S BETTER... NERVES ARE *CALMER.*

SUCH A THING... *SUCH A THING!* NAMELESS, DARK, FROM THE BLACKNESS *BEHIND* THE STARS!

WHAT COULD--

--eh?

IT CANNOT BE! NO! *NOO!*

NOOOOOO!

AT AROUND THE SAME TIME, IN ANOTHER FAMOUSLY UNFATHOMABLE PLACE, THIS ONE CALLED NEW YORK...

...THE USUALLY SMOOTH AND FLAWLESS SKIN OF REALITY BLEMISHED FOR A MOMENT.

THE ABOMINATION WHICH CRAWLED FROM THAT RENT IN SPACE STANK OF THE MIASMAL DAEMON-PITS.

AND IN AN ISOLATED ALLEYWAY, THE SURFACE TENSION OF CREATION... NOT TO MENTION A NUMBER OF PARKED AUTOMOBILES... RUPTURED APART.

IT BLINKED, MURMURING, AND PREPARED TO SCURRY AWAY INTO THE MANHATTAN NIGHT...

...BUT A FLASH OF COLD, HARD LIGHT MADE IT STOP IN ITS TRACKS.

AND THAT IS WHERE SHE ENTERS THIS TALE.

HER NAME IS

MAGIK

SHE HAS ANOTHER, HUMAN NAME, ONE THAT I KNOW HER BY, BUT SHE SELDOM USES IT NOW.

NOW THAT SHE HAS BECOME THIS.

AS THE GLARE OF HER INTER-DIMENSIONAL STEPPING DISK GLITTERED AND DISSIPATED AROUND HER, SHE LAUNCHED FORWARD INTO OUR MORTAL REALITY AND DELIVERED HER ULTIMATUM...

YOU MUST *RETURN*, DAEMON-THING! YOU DO NOT *BELONG* IN THIS WORLD!

SURRENDER TO THE GUARDIAN OF LIMBO NOW, OR *FOREVER* SUFFER THE *CONSEQUENCES!*

THE CROSSING GUARD

DAN ABNETT & ANDY LANNING writers LIAM MCCORMACK-SHARP artist
SHARPEFONT & PT letterer KEVIN SOMERS colorist MIKE MARTS editor BOB HARRAS editor in chief

IF THE THING HEARD HER, OR EVEN UNDERSTOOD HER WORDS, IT MADE NO SIGN.

...AND THEY ARE ALWAYS WRONG.

WITH A SNARL, IT TURNED AND LURCHED AWAY.

SO...YOU CHOOSE TO RUN. NO SURPRISES THERE. YOUR KIND ALWAYS THINK THEY KNOW BEST...

...AND A WALL OF ARCANE FLAME RACED FROM ITS TIP TO ENCIRCLE THE FLEEING THING.

NOW SHE HAD ITS UNDIVIDED ATTENTION.

SHE STRUCK THE POINT OF HER ELDRITCH BLADE --THE SOULSWORD-- AGAINST THE ASPHALT...

HER BLADE MOVED AGAIN, MORE SWIFTLY AND DEFTLY NOW, INCISING GLITTER TRAILS OF RUNES AND SIGILS IN THE VERY AIR ITSELF.

SHE BLEW ON THEM, AS A LOVER WOULD A GOODBYE KISS, AND THEY DRIFTED OFF HER HAND LIKE GOSSAMER...

...TO COMBUST THE PARKED VEHICLES AT THE STREET END WITH A MAGICAL HAMMERBLOW.

IF YOU'RE *STILL ALIVE*, PIT-THING, I WOULD SUGGEST THAT *NOW* IS A GOOD TIME TO SUBMIT.

IF YOU'RE *DEAD*... I WOULDN'T BE AT ALL SURPRISED.

OR DISTRESSED.

SOMETHING STIRRED IN THE FURNACE-GLARE OF HER STRIKE.

REALIZING IT COULDN'T ESCAPE, THE DAEMON CHOSE TO TURN AND FIGHT.

AS I SUSPECTED... AN *ARCH-FIEND* OF *PIT*, TRYING TO PASS ITSELF OFF AS A MINOR GHOUL.

I WAS RIGHT TO MAKE YOU MY *PRIMARY* QUARRY TONIGHT!

AND IN ORDER TO FIGHT, IT TRANSFORMED INTO ITS TRUE STATE...

HER SOULSWORD CUT A FRESH STEPPING DISK AROUND HER FEET...

...AND SHE WAS **GONE**. THE ARCH-FIEND HESITATED, CONFUSED.

BEHIND YOU, FIEND! TURN AND *PERISH!*

TURN IT DID, BUT FAR FASTER THAN SOMETHING OF ITS SIZE AND BULK SHOULD HAVE BEEN CAPABLE OF.

THIS WAS A TRICK OF **REPOSITIONING** SHE'D LEARNED FROM AN OLD FRIEND OF HERS.

AN X-MAN NAMED **KURT WAGNER**.

ITS INNER EYES THROBBED WITH GHASTLY POWER...

...AND ONLY HER SPEED KEPT HER CLEAR OF THE BLAST THEY UNLEASHED.

BUT THE BACKWASH OF THE BLAST HAD DAZED HER. DAEMON LIMBS CLAWED CLOSER...

UNNGH!

...HER ARMS WERE PINNED, ITS UNHOLY BREATH IN HER FACE...

...AND WORSE THAN ITS BREATH...

GAH!

KRAKKK!

AND SO SHE SHOWED IT THOSE HORNS WEREN'T JUST FOR DECORATION.

AS IT REELED, SQUALLING, HER ARMS SLIPPED FREE. SHE TURNED HER SWORD-POINT...

...AND DELIVERED THE DECIDING BLOW.

SIRENS WAILED. ALARMS, MANY OF THEM, HAD BEEN SET OFF.

PAH! THEY *TASTE* AS BAD AS THEY *LOOK.*

AND MAGIK, TRUE TO THE ART WHOSE NAME SHE BEARS, SLIPPED AWAY AND LEFT NOT A SINGLE EVIDENTIAL TRACE OF HERSELF BEHIND.

SHE HAD OTHER VISITS TO MAKE THAT NIGHT.

FIRST STOP, THE BRADBURY AMERICANA, A DECAYING RESIDENTIAL HOTEL OFF FOURTH AVENUE.

HER FOOTSTEPS ECHOED DOWN THE FRAYING CARPETS OF THE ENDLESS HALLWAYS.

...WELL, JERRY, THAT WAS WHEN I REALIZED MY BABY-SITTER WAS A CROSS-DRESSING SERIAL KILLER...

...BUT YOU SAY, DESPITE THAT, YOU LOVE HIM. RIGHT, ASHLYN?

WHAT D'YA THINK *YOU'RE* LOOKING AT?

NOTHING.

IT'S BEST TO IGNORE THE RESIDENTS THERE...

...NO MATTER WHAT YOU SEE THROUGH THE HALF-OPEN DOORS.

SCRABBLE!

SNUFFLE!

CHINK!

HEY, MAGIK! HOW YOU DOIN'?

I'M FIXIN' A SNACK. WANT SOME?

13

NO THANKS, PHIL.

NOK NOK

WHO IS IT?

IT'S *ME*. OPEN THE DOOR, NUGENT.

I THOUGHT I'D STOP BY AND SEE HOW THE WORK WAS GOING.

COME THROUGH TO THE BATHROOM, MY DEAR, AND I'LL BRING YOU UP TO SPEED.

SEE? IT'S LOOKING GOOD!

I STARTED BUILDING IT IN THE LOUNGE ORIGINALLY, BUT BROUGHT IT THROUGH HERE ABOUT A WEEK AGO.

I NEEDED THE BATHTUB SO I COULD DRAIN THE *SECRETIONS* AWAY.

SEE HOW IT'S TICKING ALONG? IT'S CODIFYING AND CATALOGING DATA I PUNCHED INTO IT EARLIER TONIGHT.

PAINSTAKING WORK, FOR SURE, BUT I FIGURE ANOTHER WEEK OR TWO AND WE'LL HAVE A REALLY SOLID *DATABASE* OF ARCANE LORE HERE.

AND A POWERFUL *WEAPON* IN MY ONGOING WAR. A RESEARCH ENGINE I CAN *RELY* ON, BASED HERE IN THE MORTAL PLANE, UNTAINTED BY THE BACKGROUND AURAS OF MAGIC THAT PERMEATE THE SPLINTER REALMS.

WON'T YOU STAY TO SEE *MORE?* I WAS ABOUT TO TRANSCRIBE THE *BOOK OF EIBON* INTO ITS MEMORY.

I'M TEMPTED, NUGENT...

"...BUT I HAVE ONE *OTHER* VISIT TO MAKE TONIGHT."

*IT IS, I BELIEVE, HIGH TIME THE **NARRATOR** OF THIS TALE PUT IN AN APPEARANCE.*

I WAS THAT OTHER VISIT SHE INTENDED TO MAKE.

*MY NAME IS **WAGNER**. MY BEST FRIENDS KNOW ME AS **NIGHTCRAWLER** AND CALL ME **KURT**.*

*SHAPED AS I AM, YOU'D BE FORGIVEN FOR REACTING TO MY GARB IN **SURPRISE**.*

*BUT I AM NO DEVIL. IT IS MY GIFT AND MY CURSE TO BE A MUTANT, A CHILD OF THE ATOM. AND IT IS MY **HONOR** TO BE AN **X-MAN**.*

HELLO? IS SOMEONE IN THERE?

AH! I AM SORRY...I WAS SIMPLY GATHERING MY THOUGHTS. DO YOU NEED *MY HELP?*

YOU TELL *ME*, FUZZY ELF.

AMANDA?

MEIN GOTT! AMANDA SEFTON! IT IS YOU!

GOOD TO SEE YOU, KURT!

I WAS IN TOWN ON *BUSINESS.* IT WOULD HAVE BEEN *RUDE* NOT TO LOOK YOU UP!

AND HOW FARES THE REALM OF *LIMBO?* *FLOURISHING* UNDER YOUR GUARDIANSHIP, NO DOUBT?

MINISTERING TO ITS NEEDS ISN'T *EASY,* KURT. THE DENIZENS OF THE SPLINTER REALMS BEYOND LIMBO ARE FOREVER CLAWING AT OUR GATES AND BATTLING TO BREAK THROUGH INTO *YOUR* WORLD.

I SEEM TO SPEND MOST OF MY TIME ACTING AS A *CROSSING GUARD...* CHASING DOWN THE *ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS* WHO FIND A WAY THROUGH TO EARTH.

HAH! WE CAN ALL SLEEP SAFELY IN OUR BEDS KNOWING THAT *MAGIK* WATCHES THE BORDERS OF OUR REALITY!

KURT, I-- AGHHH!

AMANDA! WHAT'S WRONG?!

AN *EMERGENCY* *SUMMONING!* I'M BEING CALLED *BACK* TO LIMBO! LET *GO* OF ME, KURT, *QUICKLY,* BEFORE--

AND THAT IS HOW I FOUND MYSELF BACK IN THE NIGHTCHILD LANDSCAPE OF LIMBO. WHICH IS WHERE THIS STORY BEGINS FOR ME.

KURT, I'M SORRY YOU WERE DRAGGED HERE, TOO. I'LL SEND YOU BACK AT ONCE!

AT LEAST GIVE ME A *MOMENT* TO CLEAR MY SPINNING SENSES BEFORE I ENDURE *THAT* AGAIN!

MAGIK!

WHO'S THIS?

VITCHEN... ONE OF MY CHIEF MILITARY AIDES.

WHY DID YOU SUMMON ME, VITCHEN?

A SUDDEN ASSAULT ON THE GREAT WALL, MISTRESS! *SEE!* YOUR HELP IS REQUIRED *AT ONCE!*

WE LOOK TO WHERE VITCHEN POINTS...AND MY MIND REELS.

A MASSIVE WALL, SO MASSIVE AND ENDLESS AS TO MAKE THE GREAT WALL OF CHINA SEEM LITTLE MORE THAN A PICKET FENCE.

THIS FORTIFIED STRUCTURE MARKS THE BOUNDARY OF THE PLACE CALLED LIMBO. BEYOND IT LIES THE MANIFOLD HORRORS AND NIGHTMARES OF THE SPLINTER REALMS--THE JAGGED PATCHWORK OF LESSER HELLS, DEMON DIMENSIONS AND CHAOTIC WASTES.

BEFORE MY INCREDULOUS EYES, THE LEGIONS OF LIMBO MAN THE WALL AND STRUGGLE TO REPEL A MASSIVE ONSLAUGHT FROM THE OUTER DARKNESS.

THE GROUND SHAKES. BLADES GLINT IN THE FIRELIGHT. MAGICAL WEAPONS CONVULSE AND UNLEASH BLINDING JAGS AGAINST THE PESTILENT SKY. BLOOD-SPRAY MISTS THE AIR.

MEIN GOTT! I HAVE NEVER SEEN SUCH A THING...

GET GONE, KURT. VITCHEN WILL SEND YOU HOME.

THIS IS NOT YOUR FIGHT.

WAIT A MINUTE!

VITCHEN? HAVE YOU A BLADE TO SPARE? TWO, PREFERABLY?

BAMF!

BAMF!

WHAT? DIDN'T YOU THINK I'D WANT TO STAY BEHIND AND WATCH YOUR BACK?

I DIDN'T PRESUME, KURT.

BUT I'M GLAD FOR THE HELP.

THE HOST PLOUGHS AT THE WALL...DRIVEN, IT SEEMS TO ME, BY BLIND TERROR MORE THAN BY RAGE.

WE STAND TOGETHER, OUTNUMBERED, MAGIK CALLING BATTLEFIELD ORDERS LIKE SOME GENERAL OF YORE.

AFTER THAT, IT IS A CHAOS OF FIRE AND BLOOD.

AND IN THAT, I DO MY OWN SMALL PART, WHAT LITTLE I CAN.

IT PLEASES ME THAT MY OLD SWASHBUCKLING SKILLS AREN'T TOO RUSTY. I PRAY, TOO... PRAY THEY WILL BE ENOUGH.

AND THAT NONE OF US WILL BE FOUND WANTING.

I CANNOT SAY HOW LONG THE ORDEAL LASTS.

OUT OF NOWHERE, THE TIDE TURNS. THE ENEMY IS ROUTED. THE HOSTS OF LIMBO ARE CHANTING MAGIK'S NAME IN TRIUMPH.

SHE TELLS ME HER SCOUTS REPORT THAT THE ATTACKERS ARE DEMONFORMS, FLEEING FROM THE SPLINTER REALM RULED BY THE CREATURE CALLED NIGHTMARE.

THEIR TERRORIZED FLIGHT WAS TRIGGERED BY THE MAGICAL AFTERSHOCK OF A NIGHTMARE SUFFERED BY NIGHTMARE HIMSELF.

THIS IS BAD. SOME GREAT *THREAT* IS GATHERING ON THE FRINGES OF THE SPLINTER REALMS. I MUST GET YOU HOME, KURT.

NONSENSE! I'M NOT GOING TO LEAVE YOU HERE TO FACE THIS ALONE!

MISTRESS... A *VISITOR* HAS APPROACHED THE MAIN GATE FROM ACROSS THE DYING FIRES OF THE BATTLEFIELD. HE DEMANDS AN AUDIENCE. I BELIEVE YOU SHOULD SEE HIM...

HE *DEMANDS* AN AUDIENCE? WHO WOULD BE SO *BOLD* AS TO--

--OH!

MISTRESS OF LIMBO...

...DREAD DORMAMMU BIDS YOU GREETING!

IT IS ABOUT THEN, GOD PROTECT ME, THAT I REALIZE THINGS ARE GOING STEADILY DOWNHILL.

NEXT HELL OF AN ENTRANCE